

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Page 1, below the title and above "TECHNICAL FIELD",  
please insert the following new paragraph:

This application is a United States national phase  
application of International Application PCT/JP03/12036 filed  
September 19, 2003.

Please replace the third paragraph on page 9 (which begins  
on line 9) with the following amended paragraph:

Example 1

A nonskid backing material in accordance with the present  
invention was prepared by mixing the following components,  
followed by mechanically foaming the resultant mixture (the  
expansion rate: 2.8). As for the amount of the component, "part"  
means "part by weight".

A paste of a PVC resin            80 parts

(a copolymer containing 7% by mole of vinyl acetate;

the number-average molecular weight: 1,700)

A PVC resin for blending        20 parts

(a copolymer containing 5% by mole of vinyl acetate;  
the number-average molecular weight: 1,100)

A plasticizer (DOP)	120 parts
Calcium carbonate treated with fatty acids on the surface	10 parts
A silicone-based foam stabilizer	7 parts
A modified urea-based thixotropy agent	0.2 parts

Please replace the paragraph which begins on line 17 of page 11 with the following amended paragraph:

(1) Water absorption

A test piece having a size of 40 mm x 100 mm was dipped into warm water at 46°C, and the water absorption was measured after 1 minute, 1 hour and 24 hours. The water absorption was calculated from the weights of the test piece before and after the dipping in accordance with the following equation:

$$\text{Water absorption (\%)} = \frac{100 \times (\text{weight of test piece after dipping} - \text{weight of test piece before dipping})}{(\text{weight of test piece before dipping})}$$